(No. II.)

HAVE

SLAVE-HOLDERS

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ON BEING

Deprived of the Power

TO CONTINUE TO

STEAL MEN'S PERSONAL LIBERTY.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED BY RICHARD D. WEBB, 10, WILLIAM-STREET,
FOR THE NEGRO'S FRIEND SOCIETY.

1830.

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HAVE THE SLAVE-HOLDERS ANY RIGHT TO BE COMPENSATED, FOR BEING DEPRIVED OF THE POWER, &c.

It often happens that subjects in themselves most simple, are so entangled by human wickedness as to perplex even the best of men. Such is the subject to which we now address ourselves.

The question in its entangled state is, "What compensation would be due to the slave-holders in our Colonies, if their slaves were emancipated by law?"

In this form, the wisest men have stumbled at it—many of the best have been perplexed, and so serious is the difficulty which it presents, that not having been yet able to solve it to our satisfaction, we deliberately go on keeping upwards of 800,000 of our fellow-men in the most unjust and cruel bondage, and cruelly slaughtering thousands of them year by year.

But were the question simplified, and offered to us in its proper character, what upright mind could hesitate? Thus, "What compensation would be due to white men, if, by wise and equal laws, they were prevented from continuing to rob unoffend-

ing black men of their inalienable rights to security in person and property; and from insulting and degrading them with impunity; and from buying and selling and treating them like blocks and brutes?"

Would not universal human feelings, and feeling as right as it was universal, cry out with one voice, "None—no compensation would be due to the white men; except it were the punishment meet for their crimes?"

But our object here is rather to refute sophistry on its own grounds, than to call it over to ours. Let us therefore look at the question as the friends of slavery might present it:

"What compensation would be due to the slaveholders in our Colonies, if their slaves were emancipated by law?"

What is meant by "emancipated?" It simply means, "being made free—not *lawlessly*, but *lawfully*."

It does not mean being emancipated from law, or from any rightful authority, but merely being made free from iniquitous and despotic power.

It does not mean that in lieu of remaining in his present state, with all law against him, and no efficient law in his favour, the black man should be placed on the antipodes of his present state, and be made free from all law.

It does not mean that the white man should be deprived of any just right which he may have to the black man's services.

But it *does* mean that the white man should be deprived of all his iniquitous rights, which in fact are wrongs, and which are at once a snare of the most ruinous description to himself, an entanglement of destruction to the poor oppressed black man, and a blot of the deepest dye upon his country.

It does mean that the white man should be deprived of his nefarious rights—

To imprison, beat, scourge, wound, sell, plunder, bereave of his wife and children, tear from his house and home, and exclude from instruction, the black man,—at every emotion of his own caprice, without any regard for equity, or restraint from law, and of the doubly destructive right to depute these atrocious powers to others, even of the vilest description.

But it is said, "If this were enacted, however just it might be in itself, and however honorable to the country, still the masters would be losers, and as they have been so long abetted in their guilt by the nation, the nation which has shared in their crime, ought also to share in their loss.

Now admitting this for the present, the next thing is fairly to ascertain what the master's loss would be.

What is it which constitutes the value of the slave to the master?

It is simply his labour—the labour that can be got out of him.

This is the value, and the only fundamental value of the slave to the master.

How will this be affected by the emancipation spoken of?

What will be the change produced?

It will not be that the slaves will be estranged from the estates, for the slaves may be bound to the estates, somewhat in the same manner as the emancipated negroes of Hayti were by Toussaint.

It will not be that the negroes will be let loose from all authority; this would be anarchy, not freedom; for every security which wisdom can demand, and power yield, is within our reach, and of course would be enacted.

It will not be that any unrighteous authority will be interposed between the master and his labourers, giving his labourers a license to idleness and disorder; for the equitable laws of their country would be extended impartially over both, and as punctiliously secure the right and wholesome rights of the master as of the labourer.

But it will simply be the change of a slave into a subject—of an oppressed, into a righted man—of a forced into a willing labourer. It will be substituting the labour of a man for the labour of a beast.

The slave is held and driven like a beast, or a machine: the power of mind is sacrificed and alienated: the perishing body, with its measure of muscular force, is there, and the scourge drives it on to toil. But the indignant mind, not less bit-

* Here we leave out of view that comparatively small and wretched class of slave masters who have no estates, but who hire out their slaves, and live upon their wages.

terly indignant because oppressed and insulted, holds back: the driver marks the unwillingness, and keenly applies the lash: the recoiling mind plunges deeper and deeper into its own ever unsearchable recesses, and the hoe falls less and less efficiently upon the cane-field from its arm: the lash goads deeper—the mind more deeply recoils: the limit comes—the contest is unequal, and the slave perishes.*

But now, according to our supposition, the slave is no longer a slave—he is a subject, a servant—one law is over him and his master—all right is no longer on one side, and all wrong on the other; but both have their rights, and the rights (*the right rights*) of both, are equally secured by the wisdom and by the power of their country.

He who was a forced, is now a willing labourer; the fruits of his toil are his own; hope is revived in his breast; mind brings all its force to the field, and what the master never *could* get from the slave, he gets without a struggle from the freeman—the rich and pleasant benefit of voluntary labour. The toil of the emancipated man is at once greatly less laborious to himself, and much more productive to his employer.

* The master is also generally ruined, then, like an idiot, wonders whence came the ruin which his own crazy despotism has produced. It can be shown from facts, and the simplest calculation founded on those facts, that the slave-masters in Jamaica alone, within the last one hundred and forty years, have destroyed of their own property, by the destruction of their own slaves, about one hundred millions of pounds sterling.

The master's profits are encreased, and what compensation does he want?

Does he want compensation because his labourers, instead of being killed off year after year, are encreasing?

Does he want compensation because his estate is rendered more productive to him than it was before?

Why, he should give compensation. The benefit would be worth a large purchase.

But how are his profits increased?

If this be indeed the case, the master ought to pay, instead of being paid, for the measure which should emancipate his slaves.

How are his profits increased?

1. The expenses of keeping slaves are done away, viz.

Clothing,
Food or Land,
Physician,
Medicine,
Hospital,
Driving.

These indeed, *except the last*, in general are but poorly and very inadequately supplied by the slave masters. But incompetent as they are for the poor slaves, they form a very heavy expense to the masters. The Rev. Mr. Bickel estimates the whole at about £6 per year for each slave.

With free labourers they would be entirely saved.

2. The preservation of the negroes.

In Jamaica the rate of destruction of slave life is somewhat upwards of one in a hundred yearly,

and the average price of a slave may be then stated at £50. This would be saved on every hundred negroes.

3. The negroes would multiply. This is invariably the case in all our Colonies with the free negroes, and with the increase of labourers the price of labour would be diminished, and the value of the land encreased.

4. This is thoroughly ascertained to be vastly less laborious to the labourer, and about three times more profitable than slave-labour to the master.

5. The master would be saved from the overwhelming snares of arbitrary power. These generally disorganize or extinguish the moral sense, and produce a state of licentiousness amongst the masters, as base as impure, and as cruel as it is proud and destructive.

6. The slave would be saved from the unavoidable pollutions, sufferings, and degradation of a state of slavery, and the master would be saved from the dreadful recoil of ignorance and degradation, wherever it shall find an opportunity to break loose.

7. The master and the nation would be saved the additional taxes for naval and military defence, which the craziness and cruelty of the slave system continually demands.

8. The cry of the blood of our slaughtered brethren would cease to rise against us; and eternity alone would fully display the extent of the curse brought down on the head of the oppressor, by the

cry against him of those whom he would not cease to oppress.

9. The expense of all unnecessary labourers would be saved.

And why now do not,—why will not the slave proprietors emancipate their slaves ?

Not because it would diminish their profits, for it would clearly increase their profits.

Not because it would involve any danger, for it is out of nature that a righted and christian man should be so dangerous as an oppressed and insulted one; and this is eminently true of the western Africans.

Not because it would be dishonorable, for it would be most honorable.

Not because it would be sinful, for all the sin lies in continually wronging and oppressing their brother men.

But because the gratification of its passions is the dearest of all things to the human mind.

Because the possession of slaves affords a thousand gratifications of passion not otherwise possible.

Because the possession of despotic power inflates and hardens the heart, and the heart thus hardened and inflated, clings to its despotic right, to those horrible gratifications, with a grasp of death.

To the mind in such a posture, what is interest? what is honor? what is the law of God? what are the unalterable rights of man? Pride has been accustomed to range in it; and pride must be grati-

fied. All the abominations of the flesh are there, and the tyrants of the tyrant, and he bows down beneath them with all the obsequiousness of the most degraded slave, while, with the brass of the rebel, he defies even holier power. He has long given himself up to work all iniquity, with greediness—his voluntary sin has seared his soul.—In his vocabulary, evil is called good, and good evil, and who is God that he should obey Him, or his brother man who is poor and oppressed, that he should be just and kind to him? Alas! that God should be his judge! and that the day is coming like a whirlwind, when black and white, and rich and poor, and strong and weak, will make no difference, but all alike partake the righteous judgment of God!

Other reasons are:—

Because the slave proprietors very seldom have full charge of their own estates.

Because the persons actually in charge of the estates have generally no more than an annual or harvest interest in them.

Because the interests of these agents are altogether involved in the perpetuation of the slave system.

Because it is one of the most difficult things in the world for a distant proprietor to disentangle the accounts of an artful agent.

Because few men have energy enough to expose themselves to the sneers and the violences of proud and bold and wealthy and cultivated wickedness.

And because all that an individual could do alone against an organized and mighty system of wickedness, would necessarily be more or less paralized by the dreadful influences around him; and except his eye were single, and his trust in God only, his best expectation might be disappointed.

What then is the remedy?

God proclaims it.

Ephes. iv. 28.—Let him that stole steal no more.

Isai. i. 16. 17.—Cease to do evil. Learn to do well.

Isai. lxviii. 6.—Loose the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke.

Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.

1 John, iv. 21.—And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

1 John, iii. 14.—For he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

And in what possible sense can a man be said to love his brother, who is an incessant thief of his brother's possessions, even his personal liberty, and who lives and riots upon the plundered fruits of his brother's toil.